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Istook Says Ax the Marriage Tax

Washington, D.C. -- Almost six years of work by Congressman Ernest Istook (R-OK) paid off today when the U.S. House of Representatives voted to relieve over 25 million American couples (over 300,000 in Oklahoma alone) who currently pay higher taxes just because they are married.

Istook's work on this issue actually began years ago, during his first term, when he wrote a bill similar to what the House approved today.

"It's simply a matter of fairness," said Istook. **"People shouldn't pay higher taxes just because they are married."**

H.R. 6, the Marriage Tax Penalty Relief Act of 2000, which passed 268-158, provides \$182.3 billion in tax relief over 10 years, by increasing the standard deduction for married couples from \$7,350 to \$8,800 or twice the standard deduction for a single person. It would also expand the lowest tax bracket (15%) to double that of the corresponding bracket for single filers.

"This is long overdue. Stable marriages are absolutely essential for society, and no law should ever give a financial incentive for couples to separate. If anything, government should encourage responsible behavior, not penalize it. "